

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Subregion:** NORTH CENTRAL **County:** BUTTE

**Applicant:** NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL LAND TRUST

**Project Title:** BIG CHICO CREEK LINKAGE PROJECT

**Reference Number:** SNC 070210

**PROJECT SCOPE**

Northern California Regional Land Trust proposes to secure funding for appraisals on three properties connecting already-protected lands within the Big Chico Creek watershed in Eastern Butte County. By providing appraisal services for the three connecting properties, this project would support and facilitate permanent protection of the riverine/riparian habitat within the Big Chico Creek watershed through eventual conservation easements. Appraisal services and eventual easements for these properties would:

- Encourage and facilitate the permanent protection of approximately 9,474 contiguous acres along the Big Chico Creek watershed;
- Link the already-protected 3,616-acre Bidwell Park and 4,144-acre Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve to a protected 1,058-acre private estate upstream;
- Ensure the protection of 16 river-miles of riverine/riparian habitat;
- Protect threatened Spring-run Chinook salmon and designated critical habitat.

Steps critical to a successful project include:

- Contract with appraiser to provide appraisals on subject properties;
- Complete appraisals for the three connecting properties, totaling approximately 656 acres.

Securing appraisals for these three properties is the first step in acquiring the resources necessary to complete the protective linkage of properties along the Big Chico Creek watershed. With appraisals in hand, the Northern California Regional Land Trust can seek funding for conservation easements on the three subject properties beginning fall of 2008.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Contract with appraiser for completion of appraisals on the 3 properties	May 2008
Appraisal reports for each of the three linkage properties	June-July 2008
<b>Final Report/Final Payment Request</b>	<b>August 1, 2008</b>

**PROJECT COSTS**

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Three appraisals @ \$5,000 each	\$15,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>

**Letters of Support:**

- none

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends funding the project at the requested amount of \$15,000.



## SNC 070210 Big Chico Creek Watershed Linkage Project

### 2. Project Summary

The Big Chico Creek Linkage Project represents an opportunity to encourage and facilitate the connection of three large, protected properties within the Big Chico Creek Watershed in eastern Butte County. By securing appraisal services for the connecting properties, linking 3,616-ac Bidwell Park and 4,144-ac Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER) to a protected 1,058-ac private estate upstream might be made possible. If realized, this would allow for the permanent protection of approximately 9,474 contiguous acres and 16 river miles of riverine/riparian habitat within the Big Chico Creek Watershed.

The three connecting properties total approximately 656 acres and straddle Big Chico Creek. The landowners of these properties have expressed varying degrees of interest in granting easements on their properties with two of the three landowners retaining the services of NCRLT in acquiring easement acquisition funding, and the third being more tentative.

All three landowners are currently financially unable or unwilling to pay for real estate appraisals to start the process. By providing appraisal funding for these three properties at this time, not only would the current gridlock be freed, but invaluable trust would be gained by the landowners and the probability of realizing this landmark project would dramatically increase.

This proposal is the first step in acquiring the resources necessary to complete the Big Chico Creek Linkage Project. Securing appraisal services from SNC in March 2008 would facilitate the completion of appraisals as early as June/July 2008. With appraisals in hand, NCRLT would then submit a formal application to SNC for conservation easement funding for the three subject properties in November 2008.

By acquiring these properties the following resources would be protected: Federal and State threatened Spring-run Chinook Salmon, FWS-designated Spring-run Chinook Salmon Critical Habitat, NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service-designated Essential Fish Habitat for Spring-run Chinook Salmon, habitat supporting Foothill Yellow-legged frog, Northwestern Pond Turtle, Butte County Checkerbloom (CNPS 1B), Butte County Fritillary, Butte County Morning-glory (CNPS 1B), California Beaked-rush (CNPS 1B), White-stemmed Clarkia (CNPS 1B), Mildred's Clarkia (CNPS 1B), Valley Foothill Riparian habitat, and Blue Oak Woodland, which provides winter forage for the Tehama Deer Herd.

The total cost of the project is \$15,000.